

**CALLYARDY
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Kids!

Disability Ministry

Team Handbook

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Welcome to Disability Ministries

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ....the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable.”

- 1 Corinthians 12:12, 22

Including children with disabilities in our Children’s Ministry is an important part of our vision at Calvary Church. As a body of believers, we are incomplete without their active inclusion in our body. They are “indispensable”. As part of the Disability Ministry team, you are an integral part of making this a reality.

This handbook provides you with the policies and procedures that are applicable to your ministry to children with special needs. Because we function as part of the larger Calvary Kids team, you will also be given additional resources as they apply to the age group or classroom where you are serving. Please familiarize yourself with this information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thank you!



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Calvary Kids Overview

Our Vision:

Children pursuing life in Christ.

Our Purpose:

Partnering with parents as we inspire each child to know, love, and obey God for His glory.

Our Approach:

- Teaching God's Word for heart response
- Modeling the pursuit of life in Christ
- Building relationships for growth

Our Core Values:

Loving God - By knowing Him personally and worshiping Him collectively

Living God's Word - By learning what it means and doing what it says

Growing with God's People - By relating authentically with others for their good and my growth

Going into God's World - By extending the gospel to others right here and around the world

Investing in God's Work - As stewards of God's gifts and servants in God's plan

Message from the Senior Pastor

Dear Calvary Kids Team Members,

I want to personally thank each and every one of you for the commitment that you are making to invest in the children and the families that come to Calvary Church. On behalf of the entire Calvary staff and Elders, I want you to know that we are your biggest fans, your strongest supporters, and your trusted guides as you serve the Lord in Calvary Kids. This is a crucial part of your own pursuit of Life in Christ. You have the privilege of being one of the first people to have a spiritual influence in the lives of these kids, and for some, the time that you have with them each week might be the only spiritual influence that they receive. One of the challenges of working with children is that you may not always see the fruit of your labor, but I can assure you that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. You are helping to lay a foundation in their lives. You are placing the anchor of the Lord Jesus deep into their hearts so that they can withstand the storms to come.

Thank you for the sacrifice that you are making to serve Calvary Church. You are an essential part of helping all of us to pursue life in Christ.

Beau Eckert, Senior Pastor

Team Covenant

Every five years you will be asked to sign the Calvary Kids Team Covenant when you receive your renewal clearance packet.

By signing the covenant, you are agreeing that you have or will:

Read and adhere to...

- ✓ Calvary Kids Team Handbook – Nursery, Early Childhood, K-4 or C56
- ✓ Calvary Church's doctrinal statement in all of your teaching and communication with children

Grow spiritually by...

- ✓ Pursuing life in Christ which will itself manifest in your personal relationship with Him, with your family, with your co-workers, and with the Church
- ✓ Seeking ways to be fed spiritually outside of the regular worship service of Calvary Church and to be accountable to other believers (e.g. ABFs, small groups, Bible studies, accountability partners/groups, etc.)
- ✓ Communicating God's love to each child who is in your care, and modeling Christ-like behavior both in and out of your classroom

Work together by...

- ✓ Being dependable in your ministry by being faithful in attendance, in preparation and in prompt arrival
- ✓ Communicating in advance to co-workers and directors when you must be absent
- ✓ Following the principles in the Peacemaker's Pledge when you have a conflict with a co-worker, a classroom coordinator, or one of the ministry staff

Please do not underestimate the importance of your role in this ministry. Each member of our team has a significant role in sharing God's love and the truth of His Word with our children each week. Please pray that God will use you to draw the children in your care into a closer relationship with Him!

We also encourage you to attend a Discover Calvary class to help you see how your role in Calvary Kids fits into the larger picture of Calvary Church.

Peacemaker's Pledge

Revised from The Peacemaker, by Ken Sande; 1997, Baker Books, Grand Rapids. p. 235-237

As People reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we believe that we are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict (Matthew 5:9; Luke 6:27-36; Galatians 5:19-26). We also believe that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ (Proverbs 27:5,6,17; Romans 8:28-29; 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4). Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on His grace, we commit ourselves to respond to conflict according to the following principles.

Glorify God

Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will seek to please and honor God—by depending on his wisdom, power, and love; by faithfully obeying his commands; and by seeking to maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude. (Psalm 37:1-6; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Romans 12:17-21; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Philippians 4:2-9; Colossians 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 4:1-3; 1 Peter 2:12)

Focus on Understanding

Instead of focusing only on our perspective, we choose to honor others by listening carefully and ensuring we understand their perspective and their needs before we respond. We choose to actively seek reconciliation, understanding that conflict is an opportunity for personal and relational growth. (Proverbs 18:2; 18:13; James 1:19; Ephesians 4:29-30)

Get the Log out of Your Own Eye

Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, we will take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused. We take others' concerns before the Lord asking Him to examine us and our ways and guide in our response. (Psalm 119:23-24; 139:23-24; Proverbs 28:13; Matthew 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Colossians 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9)

Go and Show Your Brother His Fault

Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will choose to overlook minor offenses or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner. If the conflict or offense is still unresolved after the involvement of a few others, we will request the help of the elders in the church with the goal of bringing reconciliation. (Proverbs 19:11; Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 6:1-8; Galatians 6:1-2; Ephesians 4:49; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; James 5:9)

Go and Be Reconciled

Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation—forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences. (Matthew 5:23-24; 6:12; 7:12; Ephesians 4:1-3, 32; Philippians 2:3-4)

Respect and Prize Differences

Recognizing that God has designed the body of Christ so that it includes many different parts, we choose to respect the differences of others. Since God has designed these differences for the mutual edification of the body, we choose to prize these differences, recognizing their value to us as individuals and the whole church. (Proverbs 27:17; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 3:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-26)

By God's grace, we will apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an assignment, not an accident. We will remember that success, in God's eyes, is not a matter of specific results but of faithful, dependent obedience. And we will pray that our service as peacemakers brings praise to our Lord and leads others to know His infinite love. (Matthew 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Romans 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19)

Social Media

It is Calvary Church's desire to create an atmosphere of connection and community among our members and regular attendees. We know that a sense of identity and belonging to a smaller group within the church will enable an individual to feel a part of the whole body.

Please do not post any pictures of the children or your team members in the classrooms on any online platform.

Guidelines for Church Volunteers

1. ***What you write is public.*** You should always assume that it will be read by your boss, co-workers, parents, children, spouse, and the attorney for the person who doesn't like you. Ask yourself if you are comfortable with all of these people reading what you plan to post.
2. ***Write as yourself.*** Use your real name. If you choose to identify yourself as a volunteer of Calvary Church or to discuss anything related to the church, be clear about your role.
3. ***Be accurate.*** Ensure that you have all the facts about your subject. If you make a mistake, admit it and be quick to correct it. Be careful that what you write would not impair your ability to serve the Lord or represent Him in the community. Remember that frustrations are best expressed in person. Sarcasm does not usually translate well.
4. ***Respect your audience.*** Don't use ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity or engage in any conversation that would not be acceptable in front of the Lord.
5. ***Choose your topics wisely.*** There are some ideas that are best discussed in person rather than a public forum. Don't allow your posts to hinder someone's spiritual growth.

Remember that what you post, even if retracted, will always be available online.

Privacy Issues

Don't post the names or contact information of individuals without their permission. Don't post pictures of others that are inappropriate or that they would not appreciate.

Please remember to consider the safety and effectiveness of our Global Partners and therefore use extra caution when commenting to or about those serving overseas—particularly limited access countries. If you have questions, contact the Global Ministries office first.

Maintain Confidentiality

Ask permission before reporting on conversations or meetings that are meant to be private. Online conversations and postings are not private. Know that what you post online may be around for a long time and potentially shared with others. Therefore, be considerate and loving: Avoid identifying and discussing others, including church members and visitors—*especially* details such as hospitalizations and health concerns or information gleaned in personal counseling. Do not disclose health information on behalf of others.

Seek to build up not to tear down (Romans 15:2; Ephesians 4:29)

Relational Boundaries

One of the components of a balanced Children's Ministry is developing strong youth-adult partnerships within the intentional and safe community of our ministry. The vast number of communication possibilities and the speed of technology require that adults working with children and students be aware of the need to maintain appropriate relational boundaries regardless of the communication medium. Communications on social media are most appropriate when conducted through a group.

Group Identity

Social media communication networks can help create a group identity, assist in planning for group activities and encourage students. These mediums provide powerful modes of connecting with youth, and for youth to connect with each other and should be channeled as such. Communications on social media are most appropriate when conducted through a group.

Adults must recognize the public nature of social networking sites and see themselves as representatives of God and Calvary Church. Thus adult volunteers agree not to post any material that could be deemed inappropriate or explicit. So doing will be in violation of Calvary's values and expected code of conduct. If an adult advisor is in doubt about the appropriateness of any ongoing or new forms of communication, they should consult with a ministry staff member for guidance.

Photography & Video

We want our members and regular attendees to understand that we will, as a regular practice, take pictures and videos of all our events and ministries at some point in time.

We will provide parents and volunteers the opportunity to complete a general opt-out form for all events if they do not want their image used. A failure to turn in a completed opt-out form constitutes consent for you and your families' pictures or video footage to be used. We will seek to honor opt-out requests for images of individuals or small groups, but cannot ensure that the request can be adhered to for pictures or videos of large group events. Anyone who sees their picture posted on the church website and would like it removed, can send a written request to the church office. Please indicate where the picture is located.

The Calvary Church Photo/Video Opt-out Form is available at any Connection Center.

General Guidelines

Approved Team Members

Only **approved** team members may work in Calvary Kids. Team member requirements:

- ✓ Attendance at Calvary Church for **at least six months** with occasional exceptions.
- ✓ An Application for Service must be on file including a criminal background, a child abuse check, and either FBI fingerprinting or a signed affidavit and National Background check.
- ✓ Membership at Calvary Church is required to be in a leadership position, including a Bible Teacher in Elementary.

There must always be **adequate supervision** to ensure the safety of the children.

- **Two approved team members**, one being an adult, need to be in the classroom at all times.
- Children should never be left unattended.
- A single volunteer or staff person should never be alone with a child in a classroom, bathroom, or hallway. There should always be another approved worker within view.

Help Needed

When Calvary Kids is in need of additional volunteers, **#999** will be displayed on the screens in the auditorium. Please go to the West Connection Center to find out where you can serve.

Children

Children should remain on church property and not go on unauthorized trips with team members.

Team members should only use activities and materials which are suitable to the age of the child and are appropriate in meeting the educational and spiritual goals of the church. Our curriculum has been designed with the age and abilities of the children in mind.

Tape Use

Using the wrong tape on the wrong surface can cause extensive damage. Please use the different colored tapes as instructed on the card stored with the tape in each classroom.

Drywall - White colored tape only, Concrete - Clear 3M packing tape, Carpets and Floors - Red tape or black gaffers tape

Identification

You will need to wear your volunteer photo ID badge any time you are serving. If you forget your badge, go to a Check-in Kiosk to print a temporary badge or go to a Connection Center. Please do not ask our checkpoint volunteers to make an exception for you. They have been instructed to not allow any adult into the hallway who does not have a proper ID.

Modesty

As Calvary Kids leaders, our goal is to help children focus their attention on God. One of the ways we can accomplish this is by dressing modestly. Appropriate dress does not draw attention to the individual, but allows both children and adults to focus on the truths being taught.

We want all aspects of our Calvary Kids Ministry to be honoring to God. Our purpose is not to present legalistic standards, but to be good role models, to be encouraging to all, and to be a stumbling block to no one. (Romans 14:13-18)

Remember, a child's perspective is different from ours. They see us from behind and from a different level when we bend over. Test yourself in front of a mirror and notice what others will see when you bend over.

Touch and Behavior Policy

Touch is to be appropriate. Always respect a child's refusal of touch. This models important lessons about respect for body boundaries and personal space.

Examples of touch that are OK:

- Reassuring touch: Pat on the shoulder, gently rubbing the upper back, or holding the hand of a child for safety or reassurance.
- Hugging gently if the child initiates or the child is receptive to being comforted. Try to avoid full body hugs.
- Tending to an injured child's wound or helping a child stand up who has fallen on the playground.
- See diapering and bathroom policies for assisting a child.

Examples of Touch or Behavior that are NOT OK:

- Any touch on a body area that would be covered by a bathing suit.
- A kiss on the mouth or cheek.
- Sexually suggestive joke or comment.
- Showing or viewing pornography.
- Hugs that are forced on the child.
- Any behavior that is romantic, intimate, or flirtatious.
- K-6th grade children sitting on volunteers' laps.
- Tickling, slapping, striking, or pinching
- Lifting, carrying, or allowing children to climb on you as part of roughhousing, etc.
- Touching any child who does not want to be touched.
- Any touch that satisfies the adult's need at the expense of the child.

Any time there are questions about the behavior of other volunteers in the ministry e.g. boundary issues, the volunteer is encouraged to bring the issue to the attention of the Staff Member leader to address the issue.

Mandated Reporters

According to PA state law all volunteers that work directly with children are considered mandated reporters. You are required to watch a Mandated Reporting video unless you can affirm that you have been trained elsewhere. Video training found at www.calvarychurch.org/mandatory-reporting explains the requirements of your position. Upon requesting online access to the video, you must check "Yes" to the statement: "By clicking Submit, you are agreeing to watch the complete mandatory reporting video and to be held accountable for the information and requirements explained within."

Instructions for Reporting Suspected Child Abuse/Neglect.

The CY-47, suspected child abuse/ Neglect Form, is located in a file in the classroom.

- a) *Fill out* the CY-47 form, giving as much information as you can. You will not have answers for all the questions. If the report was made online a CY-47 does NOT need to be completed and sent
- b) *Make 2 copies* of the CY-47
 1. One copy must be given to the staff person
 2. The other copy will be kept by the mandated reporter for their records
- c) *Mail or fax* the original form CY-47 to the Lancaster Children and Youth Agency *within 48 hours* of making the report

Lancaster County Children and Youth Agency
900 E. King St. Lancaster, PA 17602
FAX: 717 299-7929

Allergies - Nut-Free Zone / EpiPens

All of Calvary Kids classrooms and hallways are **NO NUT** and **NO PEANUT BUTTER** zones. This restriction is in place even if another group is using the room as minute particles of peanut residue can trigger an allergic reaction in highly sensitive individuals. It's just not worth the risk.

Some children may require the presence of an **EpiPen** to use in the event of an allergic reaction. If one is needed, the parent will bring it and inform you of it. When you receive an EpiPen, make sure it is in a sealed plastic bag and labeled with the child's name. Place it in the red emergency bag on the wall. If the child has a severe allergic reaction, one class leader should administer the EpiPen, and another leader should call the West Connection Center to ask them to contact the parents and the Emergency Response Coordinator, Jonathan Frank or Rickey Batz.

Emergencies

Windows on classroom doors should be unobstructed and clear. Blinds must remain up at all times except during a lock down emergency situation.

The **first aid kit** is located inside the red emergency backpack. In the Nursery and Early Childhood classrooms, this backpack is hanging near the door. In K-4 and C56 classrooms, this backpack is hanging by the check-in desk. Adult team members may clean up minor scrapes and apply band aids and icepacks as needed.

Whenever you **leave the room as a class**, take the emergency backpack with you so that you will have all of your first aid supplies readily available if needed! If you find the first aid kit running low on any supplies, please let the director know right away so that supplies can be replenished. In K-4 and C56 classrooms, extra supplies can be found in the Generic closet; please let the director know when this closet supply runs low.

Emergency 911 calls:

1. Team members are to call 911 directly, if a child or an adult is:
 - Unresponsive
 - Not Breathing
 - Has No Pulse
 - Has Excessive Bleeding
 - Is Having a Seizure.
2. After you have called 911, call the West Connection Center ext 247 and let them know what the medical emergency is and state that you have already called 911. The team member at the West Connection Center will then contact the Emergency Response Coordinator; Jonathan Frank (Facilities Manager) or if absent contact Rickey Batz.

Evacuation Procedures

Calvary Kids has plans in place for multiple emergencies and/or evacuation situations. Training on these protocols will be done in person and will not be posted on-line or printed for mass distribution. See your ministry leader for more details. Review procedures periodically throughout the year.

Sickness

In an effort to provide a healthy and safe environment for everyone, we ask that *children and adults* not be in our classrooms if they have any of the following symptoms or illnesses:

Active Chicken Pox	Lice
Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)	Measles
Diarrhea (for any reason)	Mumps
Fever within the past 24 hours	Rash
Infection of any type	Vomiting (within the past 24 hours)

In addition, for *Nursery* or *Early Childhood* Classrooms:

- Cold
- Coughing
- Runny nose (clear drainage is allowed but not encouraged)

If a child is being treated with antibiotics, he/she should be on the medicine for at least 24 hours before coming to any of the Calvary Kids classrooms.

If any of these symptoms are noticed in a child, please promptly locate the parents and ask them to remove their child from class. For the health and safety of all our children and staff, there will be no exceptions to this policy. If you have any questions about the symptoms you notice, please talk with your room coordinator or with one of the Calvary Kids Directors

Lice:

If you discover, either through the parent or through conversation with other adults, that a child has been exposed to, or is being treated for lice, please make sure that your director is informed.

Please do not talk with others about the matter. We do not want to cause any harm to the family that has been dealing with lice or cause other people to panic.

Thank you for helping us to provide a safe and healthy environment for child and team member. We appreciate your cooperation and courtesy.

Incident Reports

An Incident Report documents an incident or injury and is a means of communication between the team member, the parent, and the director. In addition, it provides proper documentation to the insurance company in the event a claim is filed.

- This form is to be a record for any incident or injury which occurs during any Calvary Kids event, on-site or off-site.
- The form should disclose only the name of the child for whom the incident is being reported. If the incident involves two children, then two separate forms will need to be filled out, with the other child being referred to as “another child.” E.g., Billy bumped his head with the head of another child while playing.
- Teachers should inform parents of any incidents, and a copy of the form should be offered.
- All incident reports must be turned in to the director on the day it occurs.
- In the event of any head or serious body injury and 911 needs to be called, do so. Another team member should. Call the West Connection Center ext 247 and let them know what the medical emergency is and state that you have already contacted 911. The team member at the West Connection Center will then contact the Emergency Response Coordinator; Jonathan Frank (Facilities Manager) or if absent Rickey Batz.

Location of Blank Incident Reports

- **Nursery:** in a file at the Nursery Checkpoint Desk.
- **Early Childhood:** in the wall pockets by the door inside each classroom.
- **K-4 & C56:** in the check-in desk filing drawer.
- **Conquerors:** in the wall pocket by the door.
- **Kids Choir:** 5th and 6th graders’ forms are kept on the shelf outside of the Kids Choir Director’s office.
- **Connection Centers:** in the main filing drawer under the label Incident Report.

INCIDENT REPORT	
Please Check Ministry Area:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood
<input type="checkbox"/> Calvary Preschool	<input type="checkbox"/> Elementary
<input type="checkbox"/> Study and Share	<input type="checkbox"/> King’s Kids
Name of Child: _____	
Date of Report: _____	Time of Report: _____
Date of Accident: _____	
Describe how and where the incident occurred: _____	
Describe any and all injuries to the child: _____	
Was First Aid given? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, by whom: _____	
Explain what aid was given: _____	
Were the child’s parents notified of the incident? Yes _____ No _____	
In person _____ Over the phone _____	
Time: _____	Date: _____
Whom did you speak with: _____	
Response from parent or guardian: _____	
Was the parent offered a copy of this form? Yes _____ No _____	
Did you give the parent a copy or did they want a copy mailed to them?	
Given _____ Need to mail _____	
Parent’s signature _____	
(If face to face conversation occurred, parent’s signature indicates that he/she was informed of this incident.)	
Other Comments: _____	

Incident handled by: _____	
Was Children’s Director notified? Yes _____ No _____	
Signature of Ministry Director: _____ Date _____	

Disability Ministry Overview

Inclusive Programming

Buddy Teams (for children infant – 6th grade)

Buddy teams are one way we offer support to children with disabilities. The team consists of the Disability Ministry (DM) Coordinator, parent/guardian, the child, and his/her “buddies”. The team works together to develop a plan for inclusion in the age and ability-appropriate ministry environment from the nursery through elementary age. Buddies walk alongside a child, one-on-one, giving support at the level needed to help him/her participate, learn, grow, and serve along with their peers. We aim to support families affected by disability by providing a way for every family member to worship, knowing their child with special needs is being well cared for. Inclusion with buddy support is available on Sunday mornings and during other ministry hours/days as volunteers are available.

Mentor support (for teens and young adults)

Mentors are available for students in our middle and high school environments. Mentors provide support on a one-on-one basis if needed but more often function as a coach or mentor. We support students on Sunday mornings and as volunteers are available, for student groups and student ministry activities.

Specialized Classes

Conquerors Class (for children Kindergarten - 6th grade)

Conquerors class is our self-contained ministry environment for elementary aged children that is open during our 9:30 & 11:00 hours on Sunday mornings. Children who are not able to remain in their typical ministry environment for the entire hour can utilize our Conquerors classroom. Each week, a specially designed Bible lesson is prepared that includes a Bible story, songs, craft, and sensory activity that relate to the Bible lesson for the day. Students and their buddies have the flexibility to work through these activities at their own pace, either individually or with a peer.

Shepherds Class (for youth through adults)

This self-contained ministry environment is for those with developmental disabilities. This class is geared toward the specific learning needs of those who attend. The students enjoy music, prayer, an interactive Bible lesson and a caring community of friends. Volunteers are available to support the individual needs of the students. This class meets during the 9:30 & 11:00 ministry hour on Sunday mornings with social events on occasion.

Classroom Staffing

You are a valuable part of the team!

Arrival Times

When you consistently arrive on time, parents feel their children are well cared. They know their child's buddy will be there waiting to help their child make the transition into the classroom.

Sunday School – 9:30 am Hour

PLEASE arrive by 9:10. Classrooms open for students at 9:15.

When Sunday School is finished, please wait with your student until the parents arrive, the 2nd hour buddy arrives or you leave to take your student to the Conquerors class. Please note that 2nd hour buddies are scheduled to arrive at 10:45. Please plan accordingly.

Kids Church – 11:00 am Hour

PLEASE arrive by 10:45. You may be relieving another buddy from the 9:30 hour or greeting the parents/child who are just attending the 11:00 service.

Discovery Clubs

Plan to arrive at 6:15 to gather and pray with the classroom team. Children will begin arriving at 6:20.

Attendance

Buddies are assigned to a “team” designated for each child/family. This team includes parents, buddies, the DM Coordinator, and the child. Buddies will receive a team list with contact information at the beginning of each ministry year (August). Parents are asked to communicate with the DM Coordinator if they will not be attending church on a particular day. Although this is our goal, often families affected by disability have “too many balls in the air” to remember to contact us about their attendance. Let's strive to offer grace to our families in this situation. If your student is not able to attend on a Sunday you are scheduled, it would be helpful if you would be willing to serve with another child if there is a need that morning; the DM Coordinator will contact you about this possibility.

If **you** have a time when you cannot serve, please plan ahead as much as possible. First, try to trade weeks with another member of your buddy team. **Alert the DM Coordinator of the trade.** If you cannot work out a trade with the other team member, please alert the DM Coordinator and a sub will be provided. If you are ill or have an emergency, please be in touch as soon as possible.

Classroom Teams

You are part of an awesome team. This is not only your student's buddy team and parents but the classroom team where your student is included. The classroom staff will look to you for guidance as they include your student. Remember, you are the model for that interaction!

Be sure you are facilitating a relationship between the classroom staff and your student. This will help him / her be included in the same way as any other typical child. Have a dialogue with the other classroom staff about ways that inclusion is working – or not working for your student. Be open to working through the challenges from both perspectives.

Communication

You play a critical role in communicating with parents on a week-by-week basis. All parents enjoy hearing encouraging words about their children! And no parent wants to hear months down the road that you've had a concern about their child that wasn't addressed with them.

At times, you may need to talk to a parent about a concern you have with their child. In all discussions with parents, remember the following:

✓ **Don't Wait**

Be candid with parents if they ask about their child's behavior or if you've recognized that their child has had a difficult day. If there is a serious and/or ongoing behavioral concern, please contact the DM Coordinator DURING the ministry hour to come to the classroom to assist and to be available to talk with parents.

✓ **The Whole Picture**

Do your best to refrain from jumping to conclusions about the heart of a child. You may not know that there are other things going on in his life that are affecting his behavior at church.

✓ **Speak Privately**

Never begin a conversation with a parent concerning their child's behavior in the presence of the child or others. If, after speaking to the parent alone, you wish to bring the child into the conversation, feel free to do so.

✓ **Seek Assistance - Don't Accuse**

Tell the parents what you have noticed and ask them if they have any insights to share that might help their child in class. Assure them that you love their child and want his/her experience in your ministry to be as enjoyable and profitable as possible.

✓ **Every day is a New Day**

God's mercies are new every morning... and so ours should be! Greet each child with a loving smile each and every week. Give them the opportunity to try again.

Terminology

Your words emphasize a person's worth.

Why worry about terminology? Because our words carry a great impact! Although it is more important to emphasize inclusion over politically correct language, we want to be aware that some people are sensitive to language. We communicate that we care for families affected by disability when we are willing to learn a new language. No one wants to be labeled. We always want to show grace and kindness, because our actions and words will have a bigger impact than we may know. Take some time to read and reflect on the suggestions given below.

Let your words **emphasize a person's worth and abilities** not their limiting condition.

Think of the person first; and the disability second. **Take the parents' lead**, using their same terminology when talking with the family or introducing them to others.

Always use Affirmative Phrases	Avoid Negative Phrases
Jane has special needs or a disability .	Jane is disabled or handicapped .
Fred has autism spectrum disorder or Asperger syndrome .	Fred is autistic .
Chris has learning disabilities ; he learns differently .	Chris is learning disabled .
Todd has a physical disability .	Todd is crippled, lame, or feeble .
Sue has a seizure disorder .	Sue is epileptic .
Mary has down syndrome .	Mary is a downs child or a mongoloid .
Bill has speech delays or communication delays .	Bill is mute, dumb , or has a speech impediment .
Pat has a congenital disability .	Pat has a birth defect .
Beth has a chronic illness .	Beth is sickly or unhealthy .
Jon is Deaf or hard of hearing .	Jon is deaf and dumb, hearing impaired , or "suffers" a hearing loss.
Mike uses a wheelchair .	Mike is confined or restricted to a wheelchair .
Jess is paralyzed .	Jess is an invalid or paralytic .
The Smiths are a family affected by disability .	The Smiths are a special needs family .
Matt is a child without special needs or "typical child" .	Matt is normal or healthy (this implies people with a disability are not normal or healthy).

Safety, Security, & Hygiene

We want to provide the safest environment possible for our children.

Your actions determine our effectiveness!

Bathroom Procedures

Always accompany your student to the bathroom. Do not let them go unattended.

If your student needs assistance using the bathroom, you must either have a 2nd person from the classroom accompany you or use a bathroom near a check point where the check point person can stand in the doorway to monitor as the 2nd adult. When possible, men should help boys and women should help girls. Teens may assist with bathroom if necessary. **Remember, no one should ever be alone with a child.**

If your student uses diapers, please use the following procedure. (Teens should not be asked to do the diaper changing.)

General Steps to Changing a Diaper:

1. Wear gloves.
2. Place soiled diapers and wipes in a plastic bag before throwing them in the trash. This will prevent unnecessary odors from gathering in the rooms.
3. Wipe the changing table with a disinfecting wipe and allowing it to air dry.
4. Wash both your hands and the child's hands thoroughly.
5. Place any soiled clothing in a plastic bag for the parents and be sure to let them know.
6. Handle any accidents as discreetly as possible. If your students does not have an extra set of clothing, contact the DM Coordinator for assistance.

Allergies

Children's Ministries is a **NO NUT** and **NO PEANUT BUTTER** zone. Other allergies that your buddy may have are listed on their "Get to Know Me" sheet and on their student lanyard. When a snack is provided during class, we will try our best to have an alternate for children who have allergies.

Drop Off / Pickup

Parents are responsible for dropping off and picking up their child. Please check the parent receipt to make sure the security code matches the number on the child's name tag. This should be done until you can confidently identify the parent with the child. Please do not allow your student to leave the classroom unattended for any reason.

Buddy Lanyards & Elopement

Each student will have a lanyard in their buddy box. This lanyard should be worn by the buddy for the entire class period. The lanyard will include a picture of the student and their name on the front and the student's disability, allergies, parent contact information, disability ministry staff contact information and the phone number for the connection center on the back.

IF your student would leave the classroom, please follow them if you can. Call after the child to “STOP” or “WAIT” or “SIT DOWN” depending on what your student will understand. If your student were to leave the classroom without your knowledge or get away from you in the hallway and you don’t know where they are, please STOP and immediately call the connection center (X247). Phones are located in every classroom and in many of our hallways. Inform the connection center a child with a disability is missing. They will ask you for some basic identifying information including the student’s name, your name, clothing description and time/location where the student was last seen. The connection center will put into place our procedure for looking for a missing child. You should continue to search for your student. Use their picture on the lanyard help alert people of the missing child and as an aid to help find the student. If you find your student, stop again and call the connection center to inform them the child is found. Someone will be in touch with you by phone if the student is found by another person.

Medical Emergencies

There may be a time when your student has a medical emergency, injury or seizure. In all cases, remain calm. If the injury is minor, you may use the first aid kit located in the red emergency bag in the classroom. Any fall or injury that would involve the head should be reported to the parents immediately. Stay with your student and ask the teacher or assistant in the room to call/text the parents. That information is on your buddy lanyard.

If there is a *life threatening* medical emergency, have someone in the room call 911 from a church phone. Address information is located on a card next to each phone in the children’s ministry wing. After 911 is called, someone should call the connection center at x247. They will alert any medical personnel in the building and help direct the ambulance. Stay with the student, keeping them calm and still. Never try to move a student with a serious injury.

A seizure would be the most common medical emergency you might see with your student. If your student has a seizure disorder, it will be noted on the buddy lanyard.

In case of a seizure...

- Have a classroom volunteer call/text the parents immediately. Their number are located on your buddy lanyard.
- Protect a student if they are falling or guide them to the floor, being careful to protect their head. Try to ease the student onto their side when they are laying down. Do not attempt to restrain the student or to put anything in their mouth.
- If possible, try to time the duration of the seizure.
- Have a volunteer move any furniture that is close to the student and to move the other students in the classroom to another area of the room.
- Wait with the students until parents arrive. If the parents do not arrive within 5 minutes and the student is still seizing, treat this as a medical emergency and call 911 following the instructions above*.

Taking a Break

When taking a break with your student, please be sure you are in public rooms and hallways and not alone in any room. You can take a short walk in the hallway, get a drink from the water fountain or find a quiet space in the classroom. Taking a break will often give us time for a “teachable moment”. Take advantage of the time away from the group to reinforce the lesson being taught or other spiritual concepts you can share with your student at his/her level.

Sensory Room

If your student needs a quiet or sensory friendly environment, you may use the Conquerors 2 – sensory room. Rocking chairs, beanbags and sensory activities are available. Our sensory room is open during the 9:30 & 11:00 hours. Please contact the DM Coordinator if you arrive at the classroom and there is not a 2nd volunteer present. Students and their buddies can utilize the sensory supplies and activities available to meet a student’s particular needs. The goal for our students is to have their sensory needs regulated and be able to rejoin their peers in their classroom.



Making Inclusion Work

Supporting our students

Transitions are hard!

Is drop off time always difficult? Maybe it's the transition from small group to large group. Look at some of the possible reasons why...too much confusion/noise, not engaged in an activity, talking to parents too long, moving to a non-preferred activity, etc. Work on solutions based on the reason for the behavior.

Behavior is communication

Your ministry as a buddy will often times involve some detective work. Many of the children won't have the ability to communicate like their typical peers. But their behavior is always communicating something important to us. Don't automatically jump to "disobedience". Think...tired, bored, hungry, over-stimulated, under-stimulated, dysregulated. Know the warning signs that precede a meltdown. And remember, what works this week may not work next week. Be ready to try something new.

The right amount of support

As a buddy your role is to give "as much or as little support as needed" for the child to be successfully included in the classroom. Sometimes that means **stepping back** because the child is able to be successful with no extra support. Sometimes it means **stepping in** and staying close by your buddy to ensure their safety and security. It can also mean **stepping out** with your buddy for a break.

Be Ready for a Break

Being included in a large classroom of kids is not easy. There may be times when your student needs a break. There also may be times when the other kids and classroom staff need a break. Please be sensitive to Bible teachers, small group leaders and other classroom staff who may be struggling with a disruption your student may be making. Be sure to have a conversation about any problems that arise so that we're all on the same page in our efforts to include kids. If your student needs a break, be sure it's something that will match their need. They may need to go to a quiet area, take a fast walk, do a "heavy" activity like pushing against the wall, or find a place to talk about what's happening. Our goal for a break is always to get back to the main classroom activity—keep that in mind for timing and choice of activity.

The Teachable Moment

Many of our kids are in situations where the Bible lesson is academically beyond their level. But the Holy Spirit is still working—be ready to emphasize something that may hit home with your student. Don't be afraid to do the small group activities in a slightly different way if needed.

Pray!

Pray for your student and their family. We have the awesome privilege of coming along side families to support their child for an hour or so each week. Remember that the other 167 hours of the week, the parents are doing this. Pray for them!

Resources

HELP is on the way!

We have a variety of resources available to help you as you include your student in their typical Sunday School classroom. Because you are on the front line—interacting with your student on a regular basis, you will know what can be most helpful for their successful inclusion.

Visual Schedules

Does your student have trouble with transitions? A visual (picture) schedule might help. We have very simple schedules available (FIRST, NEXT, LAST) or more detailed schedules that show each of the classroom activities in the order they occur. These can be adapted to be interactive for kids who need to know what's finished and what's still to come.

Curriculum Helps

Do you think your student could benefit from some added visuals for the classroom Bible lesson? Would their own picture Bible help them to stay more engaged? Do they need worksheets or activities simplified? If you have an idea that would make the Bible lesson better match your buddies learning level, please contact the DM Coordinator to talk through accommodations that can be made available.

Physical Accommodations

Does your student have a hard time sitting in a chair? We have some weighted lap pads and other tools that might help. Does your child use a wheelchair? Use a clip board for activities where they can't easily access the table.

Fidgets

Is your student having trouble paying attention or seem to always need to be touching something or playing with something? They may have a sensory need that is interfering with their ability to pay attention. A fidget may be the answer. A fidget may be some sort of plastic object, squishy item, something that requires tactile manipulation or just something that has a sensory quality that is appealing to a child. Holding this object helps to distract their brain in a good way so that the child can concentrate. Speak to the DM Coordinator for help securing possible fidget items for your student.

Incentive Charts

Do you find yourself constantly correcting a child's behavior? Is there a particular behavior that you are struggling to manage in the classroom? An incentive chart may help. We have a variety of ways to implement this, depending on your student's need.

Please contact the DM Coordinator if you think any of the supports listed would be helpful to your student. If you have another idea, pass it along and we'll try to make it work.

Strategies and Ideas

Be Ready! Fill your toolbox with ideas to make inclusion successful.

Transition Strategies

- Have a consistent schedule from week to week. This will help children know what to expect.
- Use a consistent signal for transition (bell, clapping, singing).
- Give advance warning if needed (ie., “In one minute I will ring the bell. It will be time to move to the large group for...”).
- Let the child bring something with them to the next activity (ie. Bring their “HOOK” activity page to finish during the large group or even a small toy or fidget).
- Bring the activity to the child (ie, bring the craft to the large group area, then encourage the child to go back to the table to finish up).
- Use a picture schedule to show the child what is next. (will be provided if needed)



Behavioral Strategies

- Take time to really look at the behavior and try to understand why it is happening. Is the child bored, hungry, tired, over stimulated, doesn't like the activity? This may help you create a solution.
- Use positive directions (ie. Instead of “stop yelling”, try “use a quiet voice”).
- When giving a specific direction, get down to the child's level and use their name. Use simple language and give directions one at a time. Allow TIME for the child to respond before repeating the directions. Model the behavior if it is appropriate. Reward compliance immediately using something meaningful to the child. A high five, sticker or even a small treat can be used. Try out a few ideas to see what works and change it up as needed.
- Use a TRY AGAIN strategy regularly to teach appropriate behavior. When a child exhibits inappropriate behavior ask them to repeat the action in an appropriate way. Guide them in whatever way is needed. (ie. If a child is running down the hall, stop, go back and walk with them down the hallway.) Praise positive behavior.
- Use a picture symbol or predetermined sign (like “thumbs up”) to encourage positive behavior. Point to the picture or use the sign without using words to encourage the appropriate behavior. Limiting verbal input may be helpful.
- Use a distracting activity if a child is having a tantrum. Try clapping, whistling, turning the lights on and off briefly. If the child will cooperate, give them a drink of water through a straw. The goal is to break the tantrum cycle so the child can gain some control.

Small & Large Group Strategies

- Define a child's space at the table by using a tray or masking tape. Put the material for that child only in that space.
- Seat a child in a place where they don't feel confined (at the end of a row) and can have access to leave if needed. Being too close or crowded could be a problem. If they sit on the carpet during the Bible lesson be sure the children have a defined space. Use carpet squares or a mouse pad. Even if all the children are on the carpet, your student can sit in a chair if needed.
- If using all the blocks or crayons are too stimulating, give the child his/her own smaller basket of items to use.
- Allow a child to bring a white board, pencil and paper or fidget to the group Bible lesson if needed. Be sure a buddy or other adult is monitoring the use of these items.
- Use as many visuals as you have available to you.
- Give an active child a job or responsibility to carry out to encourage them be included and engaged.
- Physical presence of an adult near a child can be helpful. A gentle touch on the shoulder may also help.

Sensory Strategies

- Explore the use of a fidget. Fidgets can help regulate a child's sensory system. They can be some sort of plastic or squishy object a child holds, distracting them and their brain so that the child can concentrate (we have a variety available to try)
- Utilize a sensory break to use a proprioceptive activity. This can help a student orient their body in space.
 - Active— "heavy work" (ie. pushing or carrying something heavy, pushing against the wall, using a thera-band on chair legs).
 - Passive—weighed lap cloth or weighted sock across the neck, carry a "heavy" back pack, (limit weighted items to 10 minutes—use infrequently) therapy seat cushion or ball.
- If a child shows tactile defensiveness, a child can use gloves to touch "messy" things. The "messy" items from the activity can also be put into plastic baggies.
- Use masking tape to mark off personal space.
- Help your student take deep breaths. Have him/her use their arms in an up and down motion as they breathe. Or use a straw or bubbles to blow out. Blow some things across a table.